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**CONTACT:** Meghan Wedd McGuire  
(804) 786-9048

**VIRGINIA RECEIVES GRANT TO HELP MEET INCREASED MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IN BLACKSBURG**  
*Over \$400,000 in federal funds will help respond to mental health needs following tragedy at Virginia Tech*

**Richmond** – The Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services announced today that the Commonwealth has received a \$409,230 grant to bolster community mental health services in the Blacksburg area following the tragedy at Virginia Tech.

Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the grant will help meet the increased demand for counseling and emergency mental health services in the wake of the April 16<sup>th</sup> tragedy from September 2007 through May 2008. Services made available by grant funds will help provide for outreach, information and crisis counseling for many local community members. These local services will be delivered through New River Valley Community Services (NRVCS) and coordinate with community providers and Virginia Tech's counseling center, which is not a state-regulated facility.

"Events like the April 16<sup>th</sup> tragedy have a significant emotional impact on individuals and communities in general and can create a post-traumatic stress response for those directly affected," said Dr. James Reinhard, DMHMRSAS commissioner. "In the days and weeks following the shootings, New River Valley Community Services worked hard to meet the mental health needs of the community. But we know people can experience symptoms months or even years afterwards. These funds are a start to ensuring continued access to needed supports and services."

Through the duration of the grant, these funds will help increase the ability of NRVCS to provide needed emergency and crisis interventions; risk assessments and short-term crisis counseling to adults and students in local schools in the community. Community outreach will be conducted through NRVCS and its community partners.

In addition, at the state level, DMHMRSAS will partner with its fellow State agencies, and work with local, federal and Virginia Tech representatives to provide any necessary training and coordination of services.

DMHMRSAS' original submission for SAMHSA Emergency Response Grant (SERG) funds was on May 12, 2007. During the past several months, state and federal officials have worked to target funds to specifically address increased needs in the immediate community surrounding Virginia Tech. This SERG Grant will fund services for approximately nine months, from September 2007 through May 2008.

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*Virginia's public mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse services system is comprised of 16 state facilities and 40 community services boards (CSBs) that serve children and adults who have or who are at risk of mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, mental retardation, or substance use disorders.*